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# Intelligence panel accepts White House word on contra aid

## Private help was not encouraged.

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WASHINGTON — The House Intelligence Committee, after a closed-door briefing by CIA, Pentagon and State Department officials, said Wednesday it accepts the Reagan administration's position that it did not encourage private or foreign aid to the Nicaraguan insurgents.

The Democratic-controlled committee has been in the forefront of opposition to the administration's "covert war" against Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government.

"It is the consensus of the committee that the explanation given by the administration was satisfactory," said Rep. Edward Boland, D-Mass., the committee chairman. Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee had come to the same conclusion Tuesday.

Boland added, however, that the House committee will continue to monitor funding for the Nicaraguan rebels.

Private and foreign funding for the rebels, known as the *contras*, became an issue after two Americans were killed when the Sandinistas shot down their helicopter in northern Nicaragua Sept. 1. The two, both members of the paramil-

itary Civilian Military Assistance group of Huntsville, Ala., were helping the *contras* as their CIA funding ran out.

House Intelligence Committee members, who had said they believed the CIA was quietly encouraging private and foreign funding for the *contras*, softened their position after hearing the Wednesday briefing and said they now accepted the administration's line that it simply did not discourage outside aid.

A committee aide said that one of the most convincing disclosures was the fact that CMA leader Thomas Posey had written a letter to the CIA Nov. 4 offering to help the *contras*. Instead of accepting the offer, the agency immediately turned the letter over to the Justice Department so Posey could be warned that he "might be treading on improper grounds," said Rep. C. W. "Bill" Young, R-Fla., a committee member.

CIA officials told the panel that after receiving the letter the Justice Department instructed an FBI agent to warn Posey about U.S. neutrality laws.

However, Posey disputed that sequence of events. In a telephone interview Wednesday, he said an FBI agent did call him but not until April 1 and in response not to his CIA letter but to a news conference in which he announced his intention to help the *contras*.